



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

**TODD P. GRAVES**

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**MAY 18, 2004**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

UPDATE: PROJECT CEASEFIRE  
**OSCEOLA, BELTON, KC RESIDENTS INDICTED  
FOR ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF FIREARMS**

**KANSAS CITY, Mo.** – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that five area residents were indicted by a federal grand jury today, in separate and unrelated cases, for violating federal firearms law. Today's indictments are part of Project Ceasefire, the district's ongoing anti-crime initiative.

\* **David R. Knutter**, 34, of Sugar Creek, Mo., was indicted by a federal grand jury in Kansas City for being a felon in possession of a firearm.

The federal indictment alleges that **Knutter** was in possession of a Remington .22-caliber rifle on May 5, 2004. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for anyone who has been convicted of a felony to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Knutter** has three 1994 criminal felony convictions for stealing, burglary and murder.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Linda L. Sybrant. It was investigated by the Independence, Mo., Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

\* **Brett A. Zeiler**, 26, of Osceola, Mo., was indicted by a federal grand jury in Kansas City for being a felon in possession of a firearm.

The federal indictment alleges that **Zeiler** was in possession of a Smith and Wesson 9 mm handgun on Nov. 25, 2003. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for anyone who has been convicted of a felony to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Zeiler** has a 2001 criminal felony conviction for assault in Jackson County, Mo.

This case is being prosecuted by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Angela C. Hasty. It was

investigated by the Independence, Mo., Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

\* **Steven S. Coats**, 44, of Belton, Mo., was indicted by a federal grand jury in Kansas City for being a felon in possession of a firearm.

The federal indictment alleges that **Coats** was in possession of a Rexio Fabrica De Armas .38-caliber revolver on March 24, 2004. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for anyone who has been convicted of a felony to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Coats** has a 1986 criminal felony conviction for sale of cocaine in Buchanan County, Mo.

This case is being prosecuted by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Angela C. Hasty. It was investigated by the Independence, Mo., Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

\* **Ezra B. Cruse**, 19, of Kansas City, Mo., was indicted by a federal grand jury in Kansas City for being a felon in possession of a firearm.

The federal indictment alleges that **Cruse** was in possession of a Norinco MAK-90 assault rifle on May 11, 2004. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for anyone who has been convicted of a felony to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Cruse** has a 2003 criminal felony conviction for drug trafficking.

This case is being prosecuted by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Stefan C. Hughes. It was investigated by the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

\* **Hollis R. Burgin**, 21, of Kansas City, Mo., was indicted by a federal grand jury in Kansas City for being an unlawful user or addict of a controlled substance in possession of a firearm.

The federal indictment alleges that **Burgin** was in possession of a Glock .40-caliber semi-automatic handgun on Dec. 7, 2003. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for anyone who is an unlawful user of a controlled substance to be in possession of a firearm. The federal indictment alleges that **Burgin** was an unlawful user or addict of marijuana when he was in possession of the handgun.

This case is being prosecuted by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Stefan C. Hughes. It was investigated by the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Graves cautioned that the charges contained in these indictments are simply accusations, and not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charges must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

### **Project Ceasefire**

Project Ceasefire, launched in October 1999, is a cooperative initiative by federal and local law enforcement and the Kansas City Crime Commission that targets for federal prosecution persons who unlawfully use or possess firearms.

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This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

[www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow)